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# The Role of Civil Initiatives in Urban Adaptation of Industrial Heritage in Türkiye: Yedikule Gasworks and Serotonin Events

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## Abstract

*This article aims to evaluate the processes of the urban adaptation process of industrial heritage sites through the evaluation and transformation of Yedikule Gasworks. The research aims to assess the role of governmental and non-governmental key actors, initiatives, and community-based organizations (CBOs), such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in promoting the importance of industrial heritage as cultural heritage in Türkiye. The research seeks to understand how industrial areas, fostered by artist-driven approaches to conservation and participation, defined as Serotonin events, mediate the reintegration of industrial areas into the city. This research aims to evaluate the urban regeneration processes of industrial heritage sites through case studies, taking into account the historical, cultural, urban, and social values of these sites. The research has been centered on exploring the role of participation and the approaches employed in the urban adaptation process, with a particular emphasis on the socio-cultural impacts. Additionally, it considers the contributions of civil society initiatives, volunteer communities, and interdisciplinary artistic endeavors in this transformation. In essence, the study aims to contribute to the ongoing debate surrounding the preservation of cultural heritage and its adaptation as new public spaces within urban environments. To this purpose, the adaptation process of the Yedikule Gasworks is investigated, with particular attention paid to the effects of an interdisciplinary approach to the preservation of industrial heritage. Additionally, case studies are presented that examine the challenges and opportunities associated with reintegrating industrial heritage sites into urban areas.*

**Keywords:** Industrial heritage, urban adaptation, civil initiatives, artist-driven organizations, Yedikule Gasworks

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# Türkiye’de Endüstri Mirasının Kentsel Adaptasyonunda Sivil İnisiyatiflerin Rolü: Yedikule Gazhanesi ve Serotonin Etkinlikleri

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## Öz

Bu makale, Yedikule Gazhanesinin değerlendirilme ve dönüşüm süreci üzerinden endüstri mirası niteliğindeki alanların kentsel adaptasyon süreçlerini değerlendirmeyi hedeflemiştir. Araştırmanın ana amacı, Türkiye’de endüstri mirasının kültürel miras kapsamında önemini ortaya koyan resmi ve sivil anahtar aktörlerin, inisiyatiflerin ve sivil toplum kuruluşları (STK, NGO) gibi topluluk tabanlı kuruluşların (TTK, CBO) rolünü değerlendirmektir. Araştırma, Serotonin etkinlikleri olarak tanımlanan sanatçı yönelimli (artist-driven) koruma ve katılım yaklaşımları ile beslenen endüstri alanlarının kente yeniden nasıl entegre edilmesine aracılık ettiğini anlamaya çalışmıştır. Bu çalışmada, endüstri mirası alanların kente yeniden kazanımı süreçleri, makalede bahsedilen durum incelemeleri üzerinden, bu alanların tarihsel, kültürel, kentsel ve sosyal değerleri dikkate alınarak değerlendirilmiştir. Araştırmanın merkezinde, kentsel adaptasyon sürecinin arkasındaki katılım faktörünü ve yaklaşımlarını keşfetmek, sosyo-kültürel etkilerini vurgulamak, sivil girişimlerin, gönüllü toplulukların ve disiplinler arası sanatsal çabaların bu dönüşümdeki rolünü tartışmak olmuştur. Bu çalışma, Yedikule Gazhanesinin adaptasyon sürecini analiz ederek, endüstri mirasını korumada disiplinler arası yaklaşımın etkilerini vurgulamakla birlikte, endüstri mirası alanların yeniden işlevlendirilmesi konusunda zorluklar ve fırsatlar hakkında durum incelemeleri sunarak, kültürel mirasın korunması ve kente yeni kamusal mekanlar olarak kazandırılması tartışmasına katkıda bulunmayı hedeflemiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Endüstri mirası, kentsel adaptasyon, sivil inisiyatifler, sanatçı yönelimli yaklaşım, Yedikule Gazhanesi

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## **<sup>5</sup>Introduction**

Historical monuments, structures, and sites classified as cultural heritage assets are integral in forming societal identity and facilitating tangible and intangible connections with the past. Cultural heritage, as defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), is a broad term that "includes artefacts, monuments, a group of buildings and sites, museums that have a diversity of values including symbolic, historic, artistic, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological, scientific, and social significance" (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020). This definition is fundamental to understanding heritage's complex and multifaceted nature, including industrial heritage sites. These sites, integral to understanding the past, provide insight into various aspects of a society's history and economic production timeline, including its social and cultural life. It is, therefore, essential to recognize the multiple values of industrial heritage, including historical, industrial, cultural, architectural, and economic, to identify sustainable ways of reusing, conserving, and reintegrating these sites into modern society while preserving their historical integrity (Yıldırım and Öz, 2021, p. 56).

It is crucial to consider industrial heritage not in an isolated manner but rather as an essential element within the broader cultural and historical contexts. As Şekerci and Akıner (2021, p. 152) indicate, industrial heritage is inherently linked to these overarching concepts. This interconnectedness underscores the urgent necessity of incorporating industrial heritage into the broader historical and cultural conservation framework. The Nizhny Tagil Charter, developed by The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage (TICCIH), further clarifies this matter by defining industrial heritage as the remains of industrial culture with historical, technological, social, architectural, or scientific value. Furthermore, the charter underscores the significance of industrial archaeology as an interdisciplinary approach to examining the tangible and intangible elements of industrial zones, encompassing their structures, landscapes, and settlements (TICCIH, 2003, p. 2).

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<sup>5</sup> This study is derived from the thesis entitled "*Role of the Civil Initiatives in Adaptive Reuse of Industrial Heritage in Türkiye: The Cases of Feshane, Yedikule and Hasanpaşa Gasworks*", which is currently being conducted under the supervision of Asst. Prof. Dr. Pelin Gürol Öngören at TOBB ETÜ Architecture Graduate Program.

The value of cultural heritage extends beyond its physical presence. People connect to places through their cultural heritage, which forms a part of their identity. This connection fosters a sense of belonging, promotes social inclusion, and facilitates more effective collaboration. However, industrial heritage is often undervalued globally compared to other cultural heritage assets and collections. By preserving industrial heritage, we retain our past and enrich our present and future, fostering a sense of community and shared history.

To understand the place and awareness of industrial heritage within the broad scope of cultural heritage, it is necessary to refer to the statistics on industrial heritage declared by UNESCO, an intergovernmental organization (IGO) that works to preserve the contributions of this heritage to world history and ensure its transmission to future generations by establishing international cooperation and standards via UNESCO World Heritage List. The industrial heritage on this list is not very distinct in the context of global cultural heritage. In 1999, 28 of the 690 sites on the World Heritage List were recognized as "Industrial Heritage," covering 5.3% of all cultural sites and 4% of all World Heritage Sites (Falser, 2001, p. 9). As of the latest UNESCO World Heritage List in 2021, 50 of the 1121 monuments, sites, and settlements are classified as industrial heritage sites (Şekerci and Akner, 2021, p. 153). This indicates a 4.4% distribution of industrial heritage sites among World Heritage Sites in 2021.

These statistics reflect a minor acceleration over the years in the valuation of industrial heritage among cultural heritage sites and represent a significant gap in global recognition of industrial heritage. Certainly, IGOs such as UNESCO and independent and non-governmental NGOs such as TICCIH and ICOMOS are important actors in industrial heritage. However, the undervaluation of industrial heritage and recognition of its cultural heritage value cannot be solved solely by international laws, agreements, and intergovernmental cooperation. It requires multidisciplinary cooperation through laws, determining appropriate preservation methods by experts, and public engagement at the local base. This cooperation will increase public action and promote the importance of industrial heritage conservation at a grassroots level. The impact of critical actors, community-based organizations (CBOs), and civil initiatives is highly significant in this process.

In Türkiye, the conservation of industrial heritage faces several significant challenges. As the UNESCO list indicates globally, industrial sites in Türkiye are fewer in number and frequently perceived as less valuable. This is mainly due to a focus on real estate potential and a lack of recognition and awareness regarding their unique historical and cultural significance. As Köksal (2006) highlights, the conservation and reuse of cultural heritage has various challenges, including insufficient financial resources, inadequate legislative support for preservation, and the loss of original features and equipment due to inappropriate functional adaptations. Furthermore, irreversible modifications that undervalue architectural and technical qualities and the use of incompatible materials, intensify the destruction of historical traces (Köksal, 2006).

In this context, civil initiatives towards industrial heritage become important and may mediate filling a gap in acting. These initiatives, organized in various ways without official assignment, may succeed in attracting public attention and potentially transforming former production sites such as factories and gasworks. These environments can potentially address the evolving sociocultural needs of urban areas and contemporary societal needs. This study examines how civil society organizations such as volunteers, the local population, and independent artistic initiatives with different agendas can raise public awareness and integrate industrial heritage into the urban fabric and its relationship with sociocultural layers in Türkiye. It discusses the potential and opportunities for considering the role of civil initiatives led by artists in promoting community participation and reintegrating industrial heritage into the urban landscape while preserving its historical significance. The study focuses on the example of Yedikule Gasworks in Istanbul and Seretonin events (took place in 1989 and 1992) to explore the implications of adapting industrial heritage sites to people's social and cultural needs.

## **Methodology**

This article employs a descriptive research method to investigate the legislative processes and especially civil approaches for urban adaptation of industrial heritage to modern socio-cultural needs, including reintegration into urban landscapes, and therefore explore a main research question as: "how do civil initiatives specifically led by artists contribute

to preservation and transformation of industrial heritage for community benefit?”. To address this question, the study examines various perspectives, approaches, and legal organizations related to industrial heritage conservation. It discusses the impact of civil initiatives in the adaptation process in Türkiye.

The primary case study is the Yedikule Gasworks, where artistic initiatives known as the Serotonin Events were held in 1989 and 1992. This site was selected due to its significant role in the adaptation process of industrial heritage along with the key actors. The study also includes the Feshane case, where the Serotonin I event occurred in 1989. The subsequent reactions to these events played a crucial role in the urban and spatial adaptation process for Feshane, an industrial heritage site in Golden Horn. This case is vital for understanding how Serotonin events and civil initiatives act as catalysts in adapting industrial heritage sites.

Data for this study were gathered from various written sources and digital archives. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively, focusing on the identification of critical actors involved in the events and adaptation processes, examination of the contents, actions, and programs associated with the Serotonin events, evaluation of the impact of civil initiatives on the recognition and preservation of heritage sites, analysis of the adaptation processes as mechanisms for architectural and cultural transformation in urban settings. This methodological approach aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the socio-cultural conditions during the events and to evaluate their influence on the adaptation processes of industrial heritage sites.

### **Key Organizations on Industrial Heritage**

The concept of conservation of cultural heritage gained theoretical ground in the 19th century and was institutionalized in the 20th century (Şekerci and Akner, 2021, p. 153). The conservation of industrial heritage was pioneered in the UK and gradually spread to other countries, leading to the creation of both grassroots and institutional organizations dedicated to this heritage (Şekerci and Akner, 2021, p. 152).

On the other hand, critical intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) such as UNESCO have played a significant role in framing the conservation of industrial sites. As Pease (2018) explains, intergovernmental organizations serve as platforms for international collaboration, where

member states come together to address global concerns through coordinated actions (Pease, 2018, p. 49). UNESCO coordinates cultural heritage by bringing nations together to protect shared cultural assets. In this sense, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), is a non-governmental organization (NGO) closely associated with UNESCO, focuses on setting principles and guidelines for conserving historic sites. ICOMOS works directly with UNESCO to evaluate and monitor cultural sites on the World Heritage List, ensuring that conservation standards are maintained globally (Pease, 2018, p. 51). These organizations set the tone for cultural heritage preservation by providing technical assistance, expert evaluations, and recommendations for conservation policies.

Additionally, non-governmental organizations as the Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, sites, and Neighborhoods of the Modern Movement (DOCOMOMO) and Europa Nostra work to protect cultural heritage. While DOCOMOMO works globally, Europa Nostra engages in preserving historical buildings and cultural heritage and raises awareness across Europe about these issues. As initiated in 1978, TICCIH, as a non-governmental organization, further formalized the global efforts to preserve industrial monuments. It is recognized as an official advisor to ICOMOS on industrial heritage. It plays a vital role in advocating for the inclusion of industrial sites on the World Heritage List (ICOMOS and TICCIH, 2014). TICCIH works to document and promote the conservation of industrial sites and landscapes, providing expert recommendations to UNESCO and national governments. This collaboration between TICCIH, ICOMOS, and UNESCO has helped elevate industrial heritage status globally, ensuring that these sites are preserved for future generations (ICOMOS and TICCIH, 2014).

In Europe, the European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH) is a non-governmental organization that has emerged to promote the preservation and documentation of modern and industrial heritage, emphasizing tourism and public awareness as tools for conservation. These efforts underscore the role of civil society and community-based organizations in advocating for and protecting industrial heritage, bringing these sites to public attention through educational programs, events, and campaigns (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Table of the intergovernmental organizations as supportive initiatives and their objectives, created by author (ICOMOS and TICCIH, 2014; ERIH and Council of Europe, 2021).

Organizations	Objectives
<p><b>UNESCO</b> (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) (1945)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conducts World Heritage List (WHL) studies related to the World Heritage Convention</li> </ul>
<p><b>ICOMOS</b> (International Council on Monuments and Sites) (1965)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aims to develop and guide principles, methods, and policies for the conservation and assessment of historic monuments and sites</li> <li>• supports and guides relevant research in the field.</li> <li>• is a global non-governmental organization dedicated to the conservation of the historic monuments and sites of the world.</li> <li>• ICOMOS network of experts advises UNESCO on properties to be inscribed on the World Heritage List.</li> </ul>
<p>the International Conferences on the Conservation of Industrial Monuments held in 1973 (first), 1975 (second), and 1978 (third)</p> <p>(The Third International Conference on Conservation of Industrial Monuments, held in 1978, then gave its abbreviation to TICCIH)</p>	<p><b>TICCIH</b> (The International Committee for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage) (1978)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is recognized by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) as an appointed advisor on all matters related to the research and conservation of industrial heritage.</li> <li>• makes recommendations for historically significant industrial areas to be inscribed on the World Heritage List.</li> </ul>
<p><b>DOCOMOMO</b> (International Working Party for Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites, and Neighborhoods of the Modern Movement) (1988)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• was founded to draw the public attention to the importance of Modernism in the 20th century and to document and preserve the products of modern architecture, design, and urban planning.</li> </ul>



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<b>ERIH</b> (European Route of Industrial Heritage) (1999)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• was established to develop industrial heritage sites in Europe as tourist routes.</li></ul>
<b>E-FAITH</b> (European Federation of Associations of Industrial and Technical Heritage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• was established to report on developments in these areas.</li></ul>

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Besides these, IGOs and NGOs work on architectural and industrial heritage; in particular, there are more organizations titled Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) that are grassroots organizations that emerge from within a specific community and are focused on addressing specific local needs such as the conservation of cultural heritage directly impacting that community. These organizations rely on local participation and volunteerism, which may contribute to decision-making.

The civil initiatives are the critical actors in cultural heritage. Civil society is an independent entity, distinct from the state (Van der Auwera and Schramme, 2011, p. 61). Civil society, encompassing non-governmental organizations and volunteer-based groups, became crucial actors in various fields, including cultural heritage preservation (Van der Auwera and Schramme, 2011, p. 63). This development extended to the conservation of industrial heritage, with communities forming to address threats to the values embedded in these structures (Şekerci and Akner, 2021, p. 152). Civil initiatives are often grassroots and voluntary and may lack formal structure or official recognition.

The civil initiatives to address cultural heritage are typically initiated and run by volunteers, local communities, and other stakeholders, often without a formal structure. The projects usually center around a particular place, historical event, or cultural element, with artists interpreting, highlighting, or preserving this heritage through artistic works, which can be called artist-driven heritage. Artist-driven heritage projects work as an informal organization or association and function more flexibly and creatively. These characteristics make them suitable for being defined as civil initiatives and effective tools for raising public awareness and preserving cultural heritage.

## **Laws and Organizations on Industrial Heritage in Türkiye**

The rich cultural heritage of Türkiye consists of many historical buildings, archaeological sites, and natural areas that bear the traces of various civilizations throughout history. In Türkiye, industrial heritage sites are evaluated within the scope of historical environment and cultural assets in the main section of sites within immovable cultural assets, according to the criteria in the archaeological site classification (Ahunbay, 2019, pp. 14–19). The preservation and sustainability of heritage is an important responsibility to ensure the perpetuation of the country's cultural identity and historical links. In Türkiye, cultural assets are protected by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in accordance with Law No. 2863 on the Conservation of Cultural and Natural Assets adopted on July 21, 1983. The purpose of Law No. 2683 is stated in the relevant legislation as determining the definitions related to cultural assets that need to be protected, regulating the procedures and activities to be conducted, and determining the establishment and duties of the persons and institutions that will take the necessary principles and implementation decisions in this regard (*2863 Sayılı Kültür ve Tabiat Varlıklarını Koruma Kanunu*, 1983)

The preservation of industrial heritage sites is also included within the scope of Law No. 2683. Municipalities and relating Conservation Implementation and Inspection Offices (*KUDEB*), units of the Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Boards, and various legal institutions affiliated with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism develop any architectural, urban, archaeological, or legal processes related to the preservation of cultural assets, including industrial heritage sites, following this legislation. These legislative conservation processes, which have a complex structure, involve a significant number of official and civil stakeholders<sup>6</sup>.

The establishment of NGOs related to heritage conservation has been relatively delayed compared to countries such as the UK, France, and the Netherlands (Güçhan and Kurul, 2009, p. 38). Despite this, Türkiye has attempted to connect with international organizations, becoming a member of UNESCO in 1946, and establishing ICOMOS Türkiye in 1974.

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<sup>6</sup> See: Güçhan, N. Ş., and Kurul, E. (2009). A History of the Development of Conservation Measures in Turkey: From the Mid-19th Century to 2004. *METU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture*, 26(2), 19–44 (page 32, figure 1).

DOCOMOMO Türkiye started its activities in 2002, further indicating the growing role of professional and civil society in industrial heritage conservation. Türkiye has nine industrial heritage sites recognized by the ERIH (ERIH and Council of Europe, 2021).

Some foundations established in Türkiye have engaged in conservation since the 1970s and provide educational services, such as the Turkish Touring and Automobile Association (*TURING* Association), Vehbi Koç Foundation, Foundation for Conservation of Monuments and Natural Heritage (*TAÇ* Foundation), Eczacıbaşı Foundation, and the ÇEKÜL Foundation. The forms of operation of national NGOs are seen through sponsorship, educational programs, and public awareness activities as social responsibility projects. Additionally, other methods and tools are inherent in the traditional forms of operation of several associations and foundations affiliated with large corporations, which may have links with mainstream governance and management units.

### **Civil Initiatives on Industrial Heritage**

Several civil associations and communities have also been established recently to promote local character, culture, and preservation of fundamental urban rights. Such civil initiatives have increased considerably since the 1990s (Güçhan and Kurul, 2009, p. 39). An example of such an organization is the Gazhane Environmental Volunteers (*Gazhane Çevre Gönüllüleri*) community, which has significantly contributed to transforming the Hasanpaşa Gasworks into Müze Gazhane in Istanbul. This is an example of successful adaptive reuse driven by local civil society and also preserved through the Dublin Principles (2011) of ICOMOS and TICCIH (ICOMOS and TICCIH, 2011). Another example in Istanbul is the Golden Horn Solidarity (*Haliç Dayanışması*), which is composed of shipyard veterans, trade unions, professional organizations and their members, neighborhood residents, and associations living in the neighborhood of the Golden Horn Shipyards. This civil initiative aims to raise awareness that the industrial values of the Golden Horn Shipyards, archaeological assets in the area, historical buildings, the urban fabric where it is located, and public property can be protected for public benefit. Like those stated above there are more civil initiatives on cultural heritage in Istanbul such as Haydarpaşa Solidarity (*Haydarpaşa Dayanışması*), Yedikule Urban Gardens Preservation Initiative (*Yedikule Bostanları*

*Koruma Girişimi*), *KIRIK* (a cultural initiative which intends to envelop and civilize multiple meanings or connotations of this versatile word in Turkish such as “crack”, “broken”, “hue”, “hybrid”, “fault”, “strange”, and “bent”), *Buradan Nereye?* (an assembly formation consisting of significant numbers of cultural initiatives and organizations that aim to create a negotiation environment about the ongoing network of relationships and structural problems in the culture and art environment), and the others.

The civil actors are users of urban spaces where individuals with different identities or social patterns consciously or unconsciously come together, meet, or reach out, and produce new public situations through these forms of presence (Arslan, 2013, p. 94). According to Özbek (2004), the limits of use for public spaces in a city are defined by the access of the public to information, the ways of gathering collectively, the forms of thinking, expression, and discussion, the development of these forms and their freedom of recognition, and their inclusiveness without any social discrimination (Arslan, 2013; Özbek, 2004, pp. 19–87). Any process that directly involves the public in the decision-making process, informs the public about these stages, and fully considers the contribution of the public in making decisions is considered public participation (Yıldırım and Öz, 2021). In this context, public participation is a highly effective element in the adaptation processes in cultural heritage sites and the architectural and social transformation.

### **Industrial Heritage Sites in the Golden Horn: New Perspectives on Artistic Initiations**

In the Ottoman Empire, Istanbul was home to 55 percent of the total of 256 industrial complexes (Günay, 2014, p. 102; Köksal, 2005). During the Ottoman and Republican periods, the Golden Horn became one of the major industrial zones, as reflected by the Prost Plan in 1936. The industrial development of the Golden Horn, which continued in the 1970s and early 1980s, had profound environmental and social impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods, including the destruction of the historic urban layout, water pollution, and alterations in the social layout (Günay, 2014, p. 102).

The Golden Horn Master Plan, enacted in 1985, proposed removing the industrial areas of the Golden Horn, opening them to public use, and

transforming them into recreational areas. As a result, a series of demolitions and expropriations were carried out under the name of "Bedrettin Dalan Operations" (Erbey, 2009, p. 6). 600 small production facilities were displaced, and 30,000 buildings, 100 of which were historical examples of the industrialization of the Ottoman Empire, were demolished (Günay, 2014, p. 102). Due to demolition, these passive recreational green spaces remained empty and unused for many years. During this period, the Golden Horn became a place with geometric vacant spaces along the shore (Erbey, 2009, p. 7). This operation process, which was carried out with centralized decisions, was criticized by society as it could lead to the destruction or damage of structures belonging to the historical and cultural heritage along with the industrial buildings of the Golden Horn (Erbey, 2009, p. 6; Kaplan, 2022a).

In Türkiye, as the social effects of the 1980 military coup began to fade in the late 1980s and early 1990s, an art environment began to emerge in Istanbul. The culture and arts sector expanded its liberties, and "dynamism" manifested itself ("Sergi: Sahnede 90'lar," 2022). In this process, performance, performance-based productions, and the stage have become tools of expression in the arts and culture environment.

The spaces of such productions and the stage have gained importance as tools and spaces for expressing discourses about the society's socio-cultural, economic, or political situations and agenda. With the spread of performance art to different spaces and new platforms, the stage could be transformed into the space of a new form of expression by going beyond being an element of art. Since the late 1980s and early 2000s, such events have spread to parks, bars, historical sites, and abandoned properties, increasing their impact on the art environment and social interaction. On the other hand, this also provided examples of how the scope of the concept of "stage" could be expanded. In the art perception of the period, the concept of "multidisciplinary" also appeared on the agenda in Türkiye, especially in Istanbul ("Sergi: Sahnede 90'lar," 2022). This situation and performance art gave artists a way out of being dependent on specific disciplines. The introduction of the concept of interdisciplinarity and the cultural productions and events associated with this concept has helped to establish and strengthen the relationship between artists, society, and awareness of heritage sites through the artist-oriented heritage

approach. This can be considered achieved through their realization of "cultural entrepreneurship".

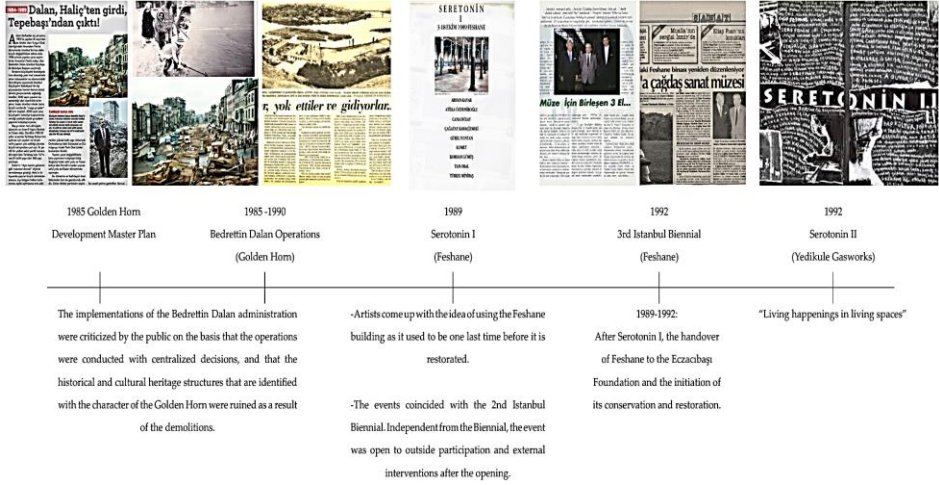
In this sense, the Serotonin events, the first of which took place in Feshane in parallel to being affected by the transformation of heritage sites in the Golden Horn, and the second of which took place in Yedikule Gasworks considering the understanding the industrial production in this area, were the first examples of integrating the concepts of performance art, stage, and industrial sites in Türkiye.

### *Serotonin<sup>7</sup> I Event at Feshane in 1989*

Feshane was evacuated in 1986 since it had completed its natural lifespan in the demolition and reconstruction planned in the Golden Horn. In 1989, when artists in Istanbul began to develop new relationships with the local administration, an event titled "Serotonin (I)" was organized by architects, artists, and participants from different disciplines who were graduates of Mimar Sinan University Department of Architecture and Department of Photography (Kaplan, 2022a), to develop a discourse on the art environment and production conditions of the period, as well as the urban decisions taken with the allocation of space. This event exhibited the different uses of the space, with installations and performances for 15 days at Feshane, and drew reactions from the public and artistic communities. Serotonin I adopted the idea of using Feshane for cultural and artistic production and exhibition programs. In the same period, the attempts to establish a contemporary art museum in Istanbul gained strength (İstanbul Sanat Müzesi Vakfı, 2018). In 1992, in parallel to the opening of the 3rd International Istanbul Biennial, the efforts to transform Feshane into a museum began. Due to administrative changes, the museum project underwent different phases in the following periods (Kaplan, 2022a). Feshane, now called ArtIstanbul, is not only a cultural production and exhibition space but also fulfills various public needs as an industrial heritage site that completed its transformation on the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye.

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<sup>7</sup> The events were named firstly as "Seretonin", which means the hormone associated with happiness and pleasure. After the first event, the artists realized that the correct spelling of the word was "serotonin". Then, the name remained as "seretonin" to separate the events from the concept in the scientific literature (İstanbul Sanat Tanıtım ve Araştırma Vakfı, 2024).

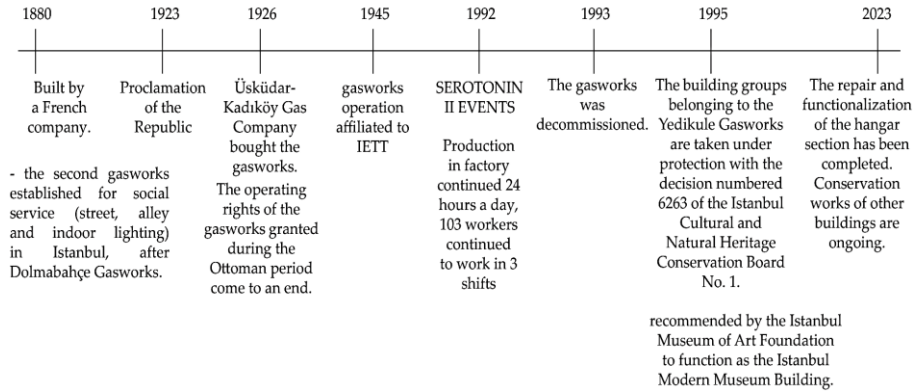


**Figure 1.** The timeline shows the historical process for Golden Horn in the late 1980s and the Serotonin events held in 1989 and 1992 in Istanbul (Salt Research archive), created by author ("Feshane Serotonin I: Tarihîn Damında Sanat Çılgınlıkları," 1989) ("Serotonin I: Feshane, İstanbul, 1989 Brochure", 1989) ("Serotonin II: Yedikule Gasworks, İstanbul, 1992 Brochure", 1992) (İstanbul Sanat Tanıtım ve Araştırma Vakfı, 2024).

### *Serotonin II Event at the Yedikule Gasworks in 1992*

When the establishment process and function of the Yedikule Gasworks, which has an important place in the history of Istanbul, was examined as the case study, it was seen that the factory was built by a French firm in 1880 in Yedikule neighborhood with the idea of spreading modern city lighting with the inspiration of the City Administration of Dolmabahçe Gasworks in the 19th century (Köksal, 2006). It was established on the seaside to utilize maritime transportation. The facility, covering an area of 52,000 m<sup>2</sup>, consisted of coal-gas production structures, tar separators, cranes, distillation boilers heated by furnaces, a washing facility, a warehouse, a weighbridge building, administrative buildings, and three gas storage tanks (Köksal, 2006). The gasworks was the first gasworks complex established for public service in Istanbul and provided street, alley, and indoor lighting for the city. Different operators owned Yedikule Gasworks during its active period, and after the proclamation of the Republic, the operating rights granted during the Ottoman period were terminated. It was transferred to IETT in 1945. In 1993,

Yedikule Gasworks lost its function and fell out of use with the arrival of natural gas in the city. The gasworks factory hosted the Serotonin II event in 1992. This event aims to reveal the potential of the industrial spaces and create a free art space (“Söyleşi: İki Doz Serotonin”, 2022).



**Figure 2.** The timeline shows the historical process for the Yedikule Gasworks and the Serotonin II event held in 1992 (Kaplan, 2022b), created by author.

Serotonin events also emphasized using historical and industrial spaces such as Yedikule Gasworks for art and cultural activities. It demonstrated the participatory effect of art on spaces in the process of transformation of industrial facilities. During the events, a synergy was created between the artists, the audience, and the workers of the gasworks, and such events demonstrated how industrial heritage sites can be re-evaluated in a social and cultural context through social participation and cultural initiative. When the Yedikule Gasworks hosted the Serotonin II event, gas production continued 24 hours a day, and a total of 103 workers worked inside in three shifts (Kaplan, 2022b). During the event, workers at the gasworks launched a campaign against labor rights and working difficulties. As a result, Serotonin II became a multifaceted cultural and social initiative that also included rights struggles in which workers working under challenging conditions expressed their demands for early retirement and social rights (Kaplan, 2022b).

The Yedikule Gasworks discourse established similarity between industrial and artistic production conditions through the choice and use of space compared to the event in Feshane—as evidenced by the performances and their names, such as “*köm-ür (co-al)*”, “*çay ve kömür (tea and coal)*”, etc. (Proctor and Bender, 2022).



The gasworks factory was decommissioned in 1993; the building belonged to the Yedikule Gasworks and was protected with the legislative decision numbered 6263 of the Istanbul Cultural and Natural Heritage Conservation Board No.1 in 1995. Following this process, the gasworks area was recommended by the Istanbul Museum of Art Foundation to be used as the Istanbul Modern Museum building and facilities. Probably, it was related to the impacts of the Serotonin II events that showed the potential of the possibilities for the future usage of this area. Despite the studies and such proposals, no practical conservation actions were taken for this industrial area for a long period. Therefore, it remained abandoned until the early 2020s and even some parts of the site were used as bus and minibus parking stops during that period. Nevertheless, in 2019, a comprehensive restoration process was initiated for the Yedikule Gasworks. This process aims to bring a new public living space and cultural center to the urban area of Fatih region in Istanbul, where this industrial area is located with programs such as a city museum, an urban memory archive, a panorama museum, a large-scale open-air stage etc. (Ibbtv, 2023). For instance, the main two vertical furnace buildings are planned to be reused as a city museum and archive of urban memory, and one of the gasometers, which is supported with a wooden-structure at present, as a digital panorama museum with other programs (Polat, 2024). The repair and functionalization of the hangar section, which was used as a barn since there was a production method that also utilizes animal power, and the water tower of the gasworks facilities were completed in 2023 as a first phase. Conservation processes of the other buildings and facilities, such as furnaces, gasometers, and the landscape of the factory, are still ongoing at present as the second phase of the conservation process in the area.



**Figure 4.** Photos from the Serotonin II event held in 1992 at Yedikule Gasworks (Kaplan, 2022b)



**Figure 5.** Photos from Yedikule Gasworks after conservation processes that began in 2019 (author's archive), and posters of the events held in this area (IBB Kültür, 2023; Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, 2023).

## Discussion and Conclusion

The issue of adaptive reuse in urban adaptation approaches has become prominent revolving around spaces of historical significance that have completed their functional life cycle and become industrial heritage sites. Production spaces, such as factories and gasworks, have significant urban and architectural value due to their location and socio-cultural layers embedded in urban memory.

A review of the case studies in Golden Horn and Yedikule Gasworks shows that, in Türkiye, the conservation and adaptation of industrial heritage sites in urban areas is, in fact, a challenging process that materialized through the solidarity and networking of the society, initiatives, and organizations with the relevant institutions. The appropriate actions and active role of these actors can lead to adequate conservation and adaptive reuse of industrial heritage for the benefit of society. The adaptive reuse of industrial heritage sites through civil initiatives is apparent, considering the case studies. Artist-driven heritage has ensured that the process is inclusive, respects local identities, and meets the needs and aspirations of people living near these historic sites. It contributes to the community's social, cultural, and economic development and creates a

sense of shared responsibility and belonging in preserving heritage for future generations.

The originality of the Serotonin events is that they were the first cases in Türkiye after September 12, 1980, which enabled community engagement with an artist-driven approach and thus initiated the adaptation processes of industrial heritage sites in urban areas after the abandonment of their functions. Based on the findings regarding Yedikule Gasworks and Feshane, the architectural conservation of these industrial heritage sites and their reintroduction to the city as cultural and public spaces today, when assessed in the context of the study's findings, reveal these cases as qualified examples. As seen in the cases of Feshane, Yedikule Gasworks, and Golden Horn, the industrial sites with such experiences and the civil initiatives that contributed to these processes are essential in terms of initiating urban regeneration and cultural adaptation processes with cultural entrepreneurship in Istanbul.

Yedikule Gasworks and its surroundings participated in the cultural transformation that took place in the first 100 years of the Republic of Türkiye, and it points to a transformation that is still ongoing today. Throughout this process, the gasworks and their surroundings have created an adaptation case and contributed to the urban and cultural adaptation of abandoned industrial heritage sites in Türkiye, acting as an example for similar heritage sites awaiting further transformation. As a result, the adaptation of these sites provides a critical discourse for future civil and cultural initiatives and transformation processes that can be realized through a community-based heritage approach. The findings reveal the value of creating a meaningful narrative that will emphasize the beginning of future transformation processes within the scope of community-based heritage and artist-driven heritage concepts through cultural entrepreneurship and improving the place of industrial heritage within the scope of cultural heritage. Non-governmental organizations are critical actors in providing the steps for cultural and urban adaptation, as seen in the findings of the case studies. Therefore, these organizations have more critical roles than they had until the present for urban and heritage management and the following possible cases of cultural heritage adaptation in urban areas, such as industrial heritage.

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